United Nations A/C.5/59/SR.40

General Assembly
Fifty-ninth session

Official Records

Distr.: General
4 May 2005

Original: English

Fifth Committee

Summary record of the 40th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 24 March 2005, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. MacKay ..... (New Zealand)
Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. Kuznetsov

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05-28276 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 127: Financing of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (A/59/707 and A/59/735)

1. **Mr. Sach** (Acting Controller), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the revised budget for the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) for the period from 1 July 2004 to 30 June 2005 (A/59/707), said that the revised budget provided for the deployment of additional 5,674 military contingent personnel, 86 civilian police and a total of 698 international staff, national staff and United Nations Volunteers. The revised amount requested represented a 35.7 per cent increase over the sum already appropriated. Military and police personnel costs would increase by 40.5 per cent, civilian personnel costs by 1.3 per cent and operational costs by 48.9 per cent.

2. The General Assembly was being requested to appropriate the amount of $252,889,200 for the period from 1 October 2004 to 30 June 2005, inclusive of the amount of $49,950,000 previously authorized by the Advisory Committee, and to assess the amount of $168,592,800 for the period 1 October 2004 to 31 March 2005.

3. He was aware of the concerns expressed over the revised budget, which the Secretary-General intended to address in his budget proposals for 2005-2006 by focusing on the Mission's organizational structure, justifying requirements for additional administrative staff, linking additional resources requested to increases in troop strength and examining the distribution of civilian staff by office and geographical location. Not all of the concerns could be addressed fully in the 2005-2006 budget proposals because of lack of time. The Secretariat would, however, undertake a comprehensive review of the Mission in 2005-2006, with a view to making long-term structural and operational improvements.

4. **Mr. Kuznetsov** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the report of the Advisory Committee on the revised budget for MONUC for the period from 1 July 2004 to 30 June 2005 (A/59/735), said that the request for additional resources arose from the Security Council's October 2004 decision to expand the Mission's mandate and increase its strength. In considering the estimates provided, the Advisory Committee had borne in mind that revised budgets must be limited, submitted only in exceptional circumstances and relate directly to unforeseen changes. However, in the current case, it had been unable to identify a clear linkage between requested additional financial or human resources and the increase in troop strength or newly mandated activities. Furthermore, the budget document contained little indication or analysis of how available the activities of other entities in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and voluntary contributions by donors had been taken into account in formulating requests for additional resources. Those problems were compounded by the attempt to reflect in the revised budget the ongoing major reorganization of MONUC without clearly explaining its rationale or considering that it could be more appropriately taken into account in the budget proposals for 2005-2006. The impression of the Advisory Committee was that MONUC had been unable to develop a clear vision for its managerial structure or processes. Unless proposals for additional resources were directly related to the increase in troop strength or expansion of the Mission's mandate, they should be included in the budget proposals for 2005-2006 rather than in the revised budget.

5. The Advisory Committee recommended deferring all action on posts, pending a thorough review by MONUC and the submission of coherent and justified proposals in the 2005-2006 budget. For urgent needs, it recommended that MONUC should begin hiring personnel essential to its expansion on temporary contracts of up to one year. It must take account of the need to cover the costs of such contracts from within currently approved resources if the General Assembly failed to approve the establishment of the posts after considering the budget proposals for 2005-2006. Although the staffing proposals had been defended on the grounds that currently approved resources could accommodate them because vacancy rates were high, that reasoning neither excused poor budget practices, nor took account of the fact that savings generated by high vacancy rates must be returned to the Member States.

6. With regard to operational costs, the Advisory Committee recommended that expenditure for official travel and air transportation should be reduced.

7. **Ms. Lock** (South Africa), speaking on behalf of the African Group, said that the Mission's resource requirements must be considered in the context of the realities on the ground. She extended condolences to the Government and people of Bangladesh on the death of nine peacekeepers in Ituri in February 2005. The situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo was dangerous and difficult and the United Nations Emergency Relief Coordinator considered that the country was facing the world's most serious humanitarian emergency. However, the problems were not insurmountable. An effective, well managed and fully funded peacekeeping mission could support the country on the road to political change, security and stability and economic and social development.

8. In its resolution 1565 (2004), the Security Council had refocused the Mission's mandate on key issues to enable free and fair elections to be held in 2005. The Secretary-General had also proposed a revised political, military and logistical concept to narrow the gap between expectations that MONUC should be able to enforce peace throughout the Democratic Republic of the Congo and its ability to do so. The African Group was encouraged that, since the revision of its mandate, MONUC had established three joint commissions to help the transitional Government with security-sector reform, essential legislation and elections, and that it had implemented a more proactive military strategy, including the dismantling of militia camps, cordon and search operations and security zones to protect internally displaced persons and safeguard humanitarian access.

9. The African Group recognized that the revised budget had been prepared at short notice, but was concerned that it had not met the expectations of the Advisory Committee. The Mission's managers should ensure that the next budget submission satisfied the Advisory Committee and gave Member States assurances of proper planning, strict budgetary discipline and oversight. While the African Group appreciated the Advisory Committee's efforts to ensure that its recommendations did not impede the Mission's functioning, it was concerned at the assumptions underlying the recommendations on electoral assistance contained in paragraph 32 of the Advisory Committee's report. No decision had been made to delay the elections, and the Advisory Committee's comments to that end clearly fell outside the scope of its mandate. The Advisory Committee and the Fifth Committee must work on the basis that elections would proceed as agreed in the Global and All-Inclusive Agreement on the Transition in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

10. The Committee must recognize the enormous logistical challenge of conducting a free and fair election in a country larger than Western Europe but lacking a road network and telecommunications infrastructure and consider that the Democratic Republic of the Congo had not had credible elections in 40 years, making the experience a first for many Congolese. Because of the magnitude of the task, the African Group cautioned against further delaying the recruitment and deployment of the Mission's election staff, who must be in place well before the elections. It trusted that the Secretary-General's next budget submission would provide detailed information and justification of the resources required to support those crucial activities.

11. Although the Group supported close cooperation between MONUC and the various other United Nations entities in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, it did not support the Advisory Committee's recommendation that extrabudgetary funds should be used for electoral assistance staff. It understood that the allocation of funds for the electoral process, coordinated by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), took no account of the Mission's activities, which should instead be funded from its own budget. Scarce resources must not be diverted from their intended purposes and the Secretariat's next budget submission should provide the Advisory Committee and Member States with detailed information on the Mission's activities.

12. Finally, the Group strongly condemned any form of sexual exploitation or abuse by United Nations personnel and peacekeepers. The Secretariat and the management of peacekeeping operations should make every effort to prevent such incidents and the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations should contribute to the Committee's discussion of the issue under agenda items 114 and 123, at the second part of the Assembly's resumed fifty-ninth session.

13. **Mr. van den Bossche** (Belgium), speaking on behalf of the European Union, the acceding countries (Bulgaria and Romania), the candidate countries (Croatia and Turkey), the stabilization and association process countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina,

Serbia and Montenegro and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia), and, in addition, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, paid tribute to the nine Bangladeshi peacekeepers who had lost their lives in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in February 2005. The premeditated and appalling attack on them underlined the need for continued support for the Mission.

14. The revised budget before the Committee had not adequately justified many of the proposed additional resources and contained no clear logic of action. The Advisory Committee had made pertinent comments which would guide the Committee's evaluation. In the light of the Mission's altered mandate, the European Union was concerned that the civilian police, who had an essential role to play in paving the way for the elections, were being recruited too slowly. While MONUC should be allocated the resources it needed to operate efficiently, the Secretariat and the Advisory Committee should identify areas for further rationalization, in light of the Security Council's request for MONUC and the United Nations Operation in Burundi (ONUB) to coordinate their activities.

15. The European Union categorically condemned sexual misconduct and abuse by peacekeepers and was confident that the report which the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations had requested would guide the Committee's discussions at the second part of the resumed session. No effort must be spared in tackling abuses and impunity, which tarnished the image of the Organization and peacekeeping missions.

16. **Ms. Ferguson** (Canada), speaking also on behalf of Australia and New Zealand, said that MONUC was not only one of the Organization's largest peacekeeping missions but also one of its most complex and challenging. The security situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo remained volatile and dangerous, as was confirmed by the recent killing of nine peacekeepers.

17. As strong advocates of effective management and clear budgeting, Canada, Australia and New Zealand urged the Secretariat to produce clear and fully justified budgets, though they were aware that peacekeeping missions could not simply be managed on paper. While the revised budget before the Committee clearly originated in the October 2004 decision of the Security Council to expand the Mission's mandate, the link between the additional resources requested and the altered mandate and operating requirements was not explained clearly, making evaluation of specific proposals difficult. She therefore agreed with the Advisory Committee that requirements for posts should be assessed in the context of the proposed budget for 2005-2006. While additional resources were not necessarily the only or best means of achieving the Mission's mandate, MONUC must be given the authority to recruit staff so as not to jeopardize its essential work.

18. The Organization must address the allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse by MONUC personnel in a fair, transparent and effective manner and any financial and resource requirements resulting from the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General's adviser on the issue (A/59/710) should be fully discussed.

19. **Mr. Wins** (Uruguay) said that his country's commitment to peacekeeping was confirmed by its 1,750 troops in MONUC. Given its close involvement in the peacebuilding process, Uruguay was concerned at the effect of poor security on the Mission's principal objective of paving the way for free and fair elections and for a stable and lasting peace. Administrative problems and duplication of efforts were a risk in any large mission like MONUC and must be a focus for the Advisory Committee and Fifth Committee at the second part of the resumed session.

20. Without appropriate resources, peace could not be consolidated nor elections held. His delegation was concerned at the Advisory Committee's assertion that elections might be delayed until the first quarter of 2006 and the Chairman should arrange for a representative of the Electoral Assistance Division to provide additional information during informal consultations. His delegation was also concerned at the upward trend in the Mission's budget, which had reached almost one billion dollars. The Advisory Committee should pay closer attention to air transport costs and the Secretariat, preferably in time for the second part of the resumed session, should carry out a detailed study, including comparison of the cost of each flying hour and fuel purchases against market rates, since efficiency might be improved without affecting the Mission's needs.

21. **Mr. Sun** Yudong (China) noted that, in a departure from past practice, peacekeeping financing featured on the agenda of both the main part of the

fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly and the first part of the resumed session. The Secretariat should provide written information about the implications for the implementation of the mandate of MONUC of considering its revised budget at the second part of the resumed session. He hoped that in future, matters relating to peacekeeping financing would be considered only at that part of the session.

22. In view of the size of MONUC and the relatively high level of its resource requirements, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations must take extra care to ensure that its budget was well managed. His delegation had always stressed the need for clear and reasonable justification for additional requirements in order to ensure that the precious resources provided by Member States were used responsibly. In that connection, and in light of the comments contained in paragraph 12 of the Advisory Committee's report, the Secretariat should explain further, in writing, the reasoning behind the requested requirements. In particular, and given the high vacancy rate in MONUC and the fact that only three months remained before the start of the next budget cycle, more convincing reasons should be given for the request for $1.87 million for 115 United Nations Volunteers.

23. Lastly, MONUC must administer its operational costs, particularly those relating to official travel, in a more effective manner and make savings wherever possible. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations must give serious consideration to the recommendations contained in paragraphs 45-49 of the Advisory Committee's report with a view to their adoption by MONUC. The Secretariat's ability to follow the Advisory Committee's good advice would not only have far-reaching, positive implications for MONUC but would also demonstrate the Secretariat's accountability to Member States.

24. **Ms. Kang** Kyung-wha (Republic of Korea) recognized both the tremendous importance of MONUC and the daunting challenges it faced on account of, inter alia, the complexity of its mandate and the continued volatility of the situation on the ground, as illustrated by the recent deaths of nine Bangladeshi peacekeepers. In confronting those challenges, MONUC could not afford to operate without comprehensive administrative and budgetary oversight. Clearer linkages were needed between requested financial and human resources and increases in troop strength or newly mandated activities and the next proposed budget should contain a much clearer analysis of existing resources and capacities and justifications for new posts, redeployment and restructuring.

25. She was concerned that MONUC had been unable to develop a clear vision for its managerial structure and processes. Without such a vision, proper budgetary control would be impossible and the risk of fraud, waste and other problems would increase. The proposed budget for 2005-2006 should take those concerns into account and include detailed information on the ways in which MONUC intended to enforce more effective financial and management control.

26. She recalled that MONUC had taken disciplinary action against 17 staff members who had been involved in sexual misconduct and abuse. It was appalling and deeply saddening that United Nations peacekeepers and staff continued to commit such deplorable acts. Following the publication of the report of the Secretary-General's adviser on the matter, the Fifth Committee should take appropriate steps to eliminate further incidences of sexual abuse in United Nations peacekeeping operations.

27. **Mr. Kozaki** (Japan) offered his condolences to the Government and people of Bangladesh on the deaths of nine peacekeepers in Ituri. Faced with the recent unprecedented increase in the level of the peacekeeping budget, any resource requirements for peacekeeping missions must be fully justified in a transparent and organized manner. Such justification, as well as prudent resource utilization and good coordination within peacekeeping missions and among other United Nations entities, was now indispensable.

28. The proposed revised budget for MONUC lacked clear linkages between the additional resources requested and the increase in troop strength or newly mandated activities and organized information on why such additional resources were needed. It also lacked analysis of the potential impact on resource requirements of the activities of the United Nations and other entities in the area. The budget proposals for 2005-2006 should take full account of the comments of the Advisory Committee concerning, inter alia, civilian staffing.

29. Lastly, he wished to express his strong support for the Organization's zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse and to stress the need for appropriate action in that area.

30. **Ms. Attwooll** (United States of America) expressed her support for the expanded mandate of MONUC and its role in contributing to stability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The recent briefing by the Secretary-General's Special Representative on the situation in MONUC had set a good example for the type of information that should be provided about other large missions in advance of the second part of the resumed session.

31. Managing such a large and complex peacekeeping mission was a challenging task. She had a number of concerns about the resource request submitted by the Secretariat and would be grateful for a clear and logical explanation of how MONUC had assessed its existing capacity and formulated its current request.

32. The United States remained seriously concerned about the ongoing allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse in MONUC and other peacekeeping missions and much remained to be done by the Organization and its Member States in order to address the situation in an effective manner. However, it would reserve its comments on that issue until the second part of the resumed session, when it could be discussed in the broader context of all peacekeeping missions.

33. **Mr. Elji** (Syrian Arab Republic) endorsed the statement made by the representative of South Africa on behalf of the African Group.

34. **Mr. Sach** (Acting Controller), replying to the questions posed, assured the representative of Uruguay that the overall question of cost-effectiveness would be addressed in the context of the presentation of the proposed budget for MONUC for 2005-2006. In response to the questions posed by the representative of China, postponing the examination of the revised budget proposals for MONUC until May would seriously jeopardize its operations. The Mission was very cash poor, with only $43 million remaining in its account. If the additional resource requirements were not approved in the near future, it would be necessary to borrow from the Peacekeeping Reserve Fund. Payments to troop contributors in December 2004 had excluded any reimbursement for MONUC and similar arrangements would be necessary at the end of March 2005. The General Assembly must, as a matter of urgency, consider the budget of MONUC so that Mission could implement the mandate entrusted to it by the Security Council.

35. As far as the request for $1.87 million for 115 United Nations Volunteers was concerned, those Volunteers were needed to ensure the effective operation of the Mission. He was prepared to consider the possibility of financing those posts from existing vacancies within MONUC, but specific authorization would be needed for that purpose.

36. With regard to the concerns expressed about the lack of clear linkages between the requested resources and the Mission's mandate, in accordance with Security Council resolution 1565 (2004) and as described on page 35 of the Secretary-General's report (A/59/707), troops and related operational support services were the main cost driver in MONUC. The concerns relating to the format and clarity of the report had been noted and would be addressed, together with other issues, in the context of the presentation of the proposed budget for 2005-2006. Lastly, with regard to the issue of sexual exploitation and abuse in MONUC, the proposed budget for 2005-2006 would contain more detailed requests for the resources necessary to establish a personnel conduct unit.

37. **Mr. Saha** (Vice-Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that he had taken note of the concerns expressed by the representatives of South Africa and Uruguay. The information about the likelihood of delays in the electoral process contained in paragraph 32 of the Advisory Committee's report had originated from the Secretariat.

38. **Mr. Pulido León** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) supported the request made by the representative of Uruguay and recalled that his delegation had already called on the Secretariat to carry out a study on flight hours and fuel costs. He also drew attention to the request for a cost/benefit analysis of the delivery of rations by air contained in paragraph 17 of the Advisory Committee's report. In view of delegations' comments and concerns about the format and clarity of the report, the Secretariat must take steps to improve the presentation of the next report by, inter alia, issuing a separate document addressing the specific issues raised during the current discussion. MONUC was one of the Organization's key peacekeeping missions and every effort must be made to solve its management problems.

39. **Mr. Sach** (Acting Controller), responding to the comments made by the representative of the Bolivarian

Republic of Venezuela, said that the delivery of rations by air and other related air transport issues would be addressed in the context of the presentation of the proposed budget for 2005-2006. To ensure that those issues received the attention they deserved, they would be discussed in detail in an annex to the relevant report. However, there were limits to the improvements that could be made before the presentation of the next proposed budget. A number of complex management and budgetary problems would take longer to solve.

40. **Mr. Muhith** (Bangladesh) expressed his appreciation to all those who had offered their condolences on the deaths of nine Bangladeshi peacekeepers in Ituri.

Other matters

41. **Mr. Elnaggar** (Egypt) recalled that, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 59/276, a number of new posts had been created with a view to strengthening the safety and security of United Nations premises. While he welcomed the recent appointment of the Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security, he was concerned that, three months after the adoption of resolution 59/276, the newly created posts had not been announced. Furthermore, although vacancy announcements for the three D-2 posts had been posted on Galaxy in late January 2005, they had been backdated to 31 December 2004, in clear violation of the 60-day rule. In addition, many delegations had not received hard copies of the vacancy announcements. He wondered whether the Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security had been consulted about the job descriptions for those particular posts and if so, when.

42. Similarly, although the new posts in the Executive Office had been announced, they had not appeared on Galaxy and his delegation had not received hard copies of the relevant vacancy announcements. He would be grateful if a representative of the Department of Safety and Security could provide answers to his questions at the Committee's next formal meeting. He reiterated the need for transparency and adherence to the Organization's rules and regulations, in particular Article 101 of the Charter, and requested that the Secretariat should rectify the situation in accordance with those rules and regulations.

The meeting rose at 11.25 a.m.